

PROVIDING ADDITIONAL FREE LETTER MAIL AND AIR
TRANSPORTATION MAILING PRIVILEGES FOR CER-
TAIN MEMBERS OF THE U.S. ARMED FORCES

SEPTEMBER 28, 1971.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on
the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. UDALL, from the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service,
submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H.R. 3808]

The Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 3808) to amend title 39, United States Code, as enacted by the Postal Reorganization Act, to provide additional free letter mail and air transportation mailing privileges for certain members of the United States Armed Forces, and for other purposes, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with amendments and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

AMENDMENTS

The amendments are as follows:

On page 2, strike out "forty-eight contiguous" where it appears in lines 1 and 2 and in line 15 and insert in each place in lieu thereof the word "fifty".

On page 3, line 7, strike out "second-class publications" and insert in lieu thereof "publications entitled to a periodical publication rate".

On page 4, line 1, strike out "thirty" and insert in lieu thereof "seventy".

On page 4, line 2, strike out "seventy-two" and insert in lieu thereof "one hundred".

EXPLANATION OF AMENDMENTS

The first amendment changes the area under Section 3401(a)(1) and (2) of title 39, as added by section 1 of the bill, from or to which mem-

bers of the Armed Forces may send or receive letter mail without cost from outside the 48 contiguous states to areas outside the 50 states.

The second amendment is technical in nature and merely changes the designation "second class publications" to "publications entitled to a periodical publication rate" in order to conform with the language of the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-375).

The third and fourth amendments increase the weight and size limitations in section 3406 of title 39, as added by section 2 of the bill. Under the amendment, the maximum weight of a package is increased from 30 pounds to 70 pounds, and its size from 72 inches to 100 inches.

PURPOSE

The three major purposes of this legislation are—

To extend free mailing privileges for letters, cards, and sound-recorded personal communications to all members of the U.S. Armed Forces outside the 50 States, and to all members hospitalized as a result of disease or injury incurred while on active duty;

To increase the maximum size from 60 to 100 inches, length and girth combined, and the maximum weight from 30 to 70 pounds of parcels that may be mailed to military personnel under the special airlift provisions of existing regulations; and

To extend the airlift for news value publications to all members of the Armed Forces overseas.

STATEMENT

This bill was ordered reported by the Committee by a unanimous voice vote. It has bipartisan support and was co-sponsored by 24 Members. It is similar to H.R. 8434 which passed the House by a voice vote in the 91st Congress.

This bill is the fourth legislative proposal from the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service designed to improve mail service for members of the Armed Forces serving overseas.

Public Law 89-315, approved November 1, 1965, authorized—

1. Free letter mail for letters mailed by a serviceman in the combat area (Vietnam); and

2. Airmail treatment for first-class letter mail and airlift, at surface postage rates, for parcels not exceeding 5 pounds in weight between a combat area and the point of embarkation in the United States.

Public Law 89-725, approved November 2, 1966, liberalized the earlier enactment in three significant respects:

1. Extended the free mailing privileges to include sound recordings mailed by servicemen in combat areas and prescribed airlift rather than airmail treatment;

2. Provided airlift from any APO and the point of embarkation in the United States for letter mail, sound recordings, and parcels up to 5 pounds; and

3. Provided airlift to a combat area for publications having current news value.

Public Law 90-206, approved December 16, 1967—

1. Added a new category for parcels (PAL) not exceeding 30 pounds or 60 inches, length and girth combined, mailed to or

from any APO including airlift within the United States upon payment of surface rates plus airlift fee to be fixed by the Postmaster General (this fee now set at \$1); and

2. Airlift extended to isolated, hardship, or combat support area overseas, or where adequate surface transportation is not available for news value publications.

The bill addresses itself to three areas that were not completely covered in the earlier three enactments. It provides further liberalization in an attempt to completely round out the efforts of Congress to provide servicemen in all areas outside the States the benefits of fast, efficient, and less expensive mail service.

First, the free mailing privilege on letters and sound-recorded communications, now available only for servicemen in a combat area, is extended by this legislation to include all members of the U.S. Armed Forces overseas, and to all members hospitalized in any facility under the jurisdiction of the Armed Forces of the United States, regardless of where located, when the hospitalization is the result of disease or injury incurred while on active duty.

Second, the airlift for news value publications entitled to a periodical publication rate, now authorized by 39 U.S.C. 3401(b) for servicemen in the combat area, is extended to include all servicemen who are located outside the 48 contiguous States of the United States.

Third, the legislation also increases the maximum size of parcels from 60 to 100 inches, length and girth combined, and weight from 30 to 70 pounds, that may be mailed to military personnel under the special airlift provisions of existing regulations.

Section 117(a) of Public Law 90-206 created the Parcel Airlift Service, generally known as PAL Service. This law, codified in former title 39, U.S.C., section 4560, provided that certain parcels not exceeding 30 pounds in weight and 60 inches in length and girth combined would be transported by air on a space available basis upon payment, in addition to the regular surface rate of postage, of a special fee prescribed by the Postmaster General. Section 2 of this bill would increase the maximum size of these parcels from the present 60 inches in length and girth combined to 100 inches in length and girth combined, and the maximum weight from the present 30 pounds to 70 pounds.

The PAL Service provided by section 4560 of old title 39 was not carried forward by specific language into the Postal Reorganization Act. Upon commencement of operations of the Postal Service on July 1, 1971, the PAL was no longer provided under provisions of law but was continued under regulations and will be continued until revised, amended, or revoked by the Postal Service, following the procedures outlined in the Postal Reorganization Act. Section 2 of this bill makes the PAL Service statutory once again.

While the Administration has no objection in principle to changes in the permissible size of parcels in the parcel airlift service proposed under section 2 of the bill, they object to a decision to make the changes in the size of the parcels by statute, and recommend that any changes as may be appropriate should be determined by the Postal Service and the Postal Rate Commission under the procedures established by the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-375). Also, the Administration objects to the extension of the free letter mail service, as proposed under section 1 of the bill, on the basis that there is a

serious question as to the justification for extending special mail privileges to servicemen not in combat areas.

The committee is convinced that inexpensive, convenient, and prompt mail service for overseas servicemen, as proposed to be amplified by this legislation, is of prime importance to their morale and well-being, particularly when they are far away from home.

As is true with the committee's actions in previous Congresses on this subject, the provisions of this bill are based primarily on recommendations made in four reports of on-site studies and investigations made by members of the committee—House Report No. 1226, 89th Congress, entitled "Postal Systems of the United States Armed Forces and Certain Countries in Europe," parts I and II of House Report No. 2198, 89th Congress, entitled "Postal Systems of the United States Armed Forces—Vietnam and Thailand," and House Report No. 91-92, 91st Congress, entitled "Postal Systems of the U.S. Armed Forces, Europe, 1968".

Pertinent excerpts from House Report No. 91-29, relating to this legislation, are set forth below:

SPACE AVAILABLE MAIL—DOD TRANSPORTATION COST SAVINGS

After enactment of Public Law 90-206, authorizing, effective in January 1968, space available mail for news publications to combat areas and areas where adequate surface transportation is not available (39 U.S.C. 4303(d) (5)), and establishing space available parcel airlift (39 U.S.C. 4560), the European postal and courier region implemented an intensive campaign urging the use of space available transportation in order to reduce the Department of Defense transportation costs.

Through the use of every medium available—radio, TV, newspapers, booklets, posters, handouts, and slogans—the customer was informed of the obvious savings to be realized by using the SAM/PAL service.

That this campaign was tremendously successful is clear from the statistics gathered from the Frankfurt aerial mail terminal.

In January 1967, of the total mail dispatched to the CONUS (continental United States), 63 percent was airmail, while only 14 percent was SAM. These percentages remained fairly stable through the year with December's percentages reaching 67 percent for airmail and 26 percent for SAM.

In January 1968, airmail reached 47 percent of total dispatched while SAM showed 34 percent. The dramatic results of the customer education began to appear almost immediately with each succeeding month.

The November 1968 percentages indicated only 25 percent of the total to be airmail, while a resounding 66 percent was achieved by SAM/PAL.

The potential savings can be envisioned when one realizes that airmail costs \$0.32 per ton-mile from Frankfurt to New York while SAM/PAL costs only \$0.0914 per ton-mile over the same distance.

For the 6-month period May-October 1968, these savings at Frankfurt totaled approximately \$350,000. I cite this saving to illustrate the value of educating users of the military postal system. I commend DOD to place even more emphasis in this area.

AERIAL MAIL TERMINAL SURVEY

In February 1968, the commander, U.S. Air Force postal and courier service, directed the commander, U.S. Air Force European postal and courier region, to conduct a worldwide survey of U.S. Air Force aerial mail terminals.

The purpose of this survey was to determine the impact the Boeing 747 will have on the postal service and facilities worldwide. The survey covered the period March 29 to June 14, 1968.

Each terminal was analyzed completely with a view toward determining its physical ability to handle the containers to be used with the new aircraft as well as the greatly increased loads.

Wherever possible, plans were prepared for each terminal to use some mechanized materials handling equipment in the future, a necessity when large volumes of mail will be involved.

The most important conclusion offered by the report entitled "USAFPCS Aerial Mail Terminals World Wide Survey (March 29-June 14, 1968)" is that the introduction of this new aircraft will make it possible and desirable to move all mail between Conus and oversea locations by air rather than utilizing surface transportation.

This concept, known as AMITA (an acronym for all mail in the air), I wholeheartedly support.

Further, the report proposed that a classless mail service should be instituted between Conus and oversea locations at rates substantially lower than the present rates for the several classes of mail moved.

A classless mail system would eliminate the present priority system of mail handling, but with adequate airlift no backlog should develop.

The formal report on the worldwide survey of USAFPCS aerial mail terminals contains much valuable background information which can be of value to our committee.

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AIRLIFT—SECOND-CLASS PUBLICATIONS

Presently, legislation authorizes airlift of second-class publications only to locations in combat zones or to which surface transit times are excessive. Prior to my visit, DOD guidelines for excessive transit time were 29 days.

Therefore, second-class publications were being airlifted worldwide except to Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, England, Denmark, France, Japan, and the Canal Zone.

At one location I was surprised and shocked when one individual told me it took 97 days to receive time-value magazines. Further investigations by me revealed that this was not an isolated case.

I felt that this was totally unacceptable and, therefore, I communicated with the Secretary of Defense and requested that he review the limitation regarding time-value publications as cited above.

I can now report that DOD review and action by the military services resulted in authorizing airlift of second-class, time-value publications to the following countries: Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, England, Denmark, France, and Japan. No action was taken with regard to the Canal Zone.

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CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

My visit to the various military postal installations in Europe has given me an understanding of conditions and problems in the field which can be gained only by on-the-spot inspections and conversations with the individuals directly involved.

In my foregoing discussion of issues developed during my trip, I have conveyed a number of recommendations. Some will require legislation, others can be handled administratively. Following is a summary:

1. Both the SAM and the PAL programs are proving of great value in providing efficient and economic mail service for our servicemen abroad. The PAL program could be of even greater benefit to our servicemen, however, if the present limitation on dimensions of parcels was eased. * * *

2. I am more convinced than ever that all servicemen overseas should have free letter mail service, not just those individuals assigned to combat areas. The House approved such legislation in 1967, but the Senate refused to go along and the provision was deleted from H.R. 7977 in conference. I am reintroducing appropriate legislation. Servicemen have no choice on their assignments and they are entitled to free mail service whether or not they are assigned to combat.

Public Law 89-315, approved November 1, 1965, provided that the rates payable to the airlines for carriage of mail under that law should not exceed the minimum rates charged for the airlift of military cargo in scheduled airline service. At that time, such rates were 12 cents a ton-mile outbound from the United States, and 10 cents a ton-mile inbound.

These mail privileges were expanded by Public Law 89-725, approved November 2, 1966. While this law provided that the airlines should be paid at rates fixed and determined by the Civil Aeronautics Board under section 406 of the Federal Aviation Act, thus eliminating any fixed statutory limit on the rates payable to the airlines, the conference report (H. Rept. No. 89-2226) expressed the view that the airlift space-available rates of 12 cents and 10 cents, then in effect, were just and reasonable. Subsequently, in fixing rates under section 406, the Civil Aeronautics Board established a both-direction rate of 11.4 cents a ton-mile.

These programs, as further expanded by Public Law 90-206, approved December 16, 1967, have been extremely effective and beneficial. The volume of space-available airlift mail carried under these laws has continued to grow very rapidly, to the point where

more than 50 percent of the military mail which is airlifted now moves on this basis. Although the airlines are not required to carry this mail, they have, in fact, carried virtually all of it which has been tendered, and have operated additional capacity to do so. The quality of service has been such that it has permitted the Department of Defense to effect economies by downgrading mail from the higher transportation rate for airmail to the lower space-available rate.

The expansion of these mailing privileges provided by the present bill will result in additional mail being diverted to the lower cost space-available transportation with resulting economies to the Government.

EXPLANATION OF THE BILL BY SECTIONS

Subsection (a) of the first section of the bill rewrites subparagraphs (A) and (B) of section 3401(a)(1) of title 39, United States Code relating to free mail for certain members of the U.S. Armed Forces and of friendly foreign nations for letters and sound-recorded communications having the character of personal correspondence.

The existing provisions of subparagraph (A) limit the free mailing privilege to servicemen in an overseas combat area as designated by the President.

Subparagraph (A), as amended by this bill, would extend the free mailing privilege to all servicemen when the letter or sound recorded communication is mailed at an Armed Forces post office located outside the 50 States of the United States.

The existing provisions of subparagraph (B) authorize the free mailing privilege for servicemen hospitalized in a facility under the jurisdiction of the Armed Forces, but limit the application to servicemen who are hospitalized as a result of disease or injury incurred as a result of service in an overseas combat area as designated by the President.

Subparagraph (B), as amended by this bill, would extend the free mailing privilege to servicemen hospitalized as a result of disease or injury incurred while on active duty, without regard to where the disease or injury was incurred.

Subsection (b) of the first section extends the free mailing privileges, in a manner similar to that provided by subsection (a) for a member of the armed forces of a friendly foreign nation serving with the U.S. Armed Forces.

Subsection (c) strikes out subparagraphs (1), (2), and (3) of section 3401(b) of title 39, United States Code, relating to airlift for servicemen overseas of certain categories of mail, and inserts new subparagraphs (1) and (2) with one substantive change.

Subparagraph (B) of section 3401(b) currently authorizes an airlift for news publications only when addressed to a serviceman in an overseas combat area as designated by the President. The bill adds news publications to the category of mail covered by subparagraph (1), which authorizes airlift to all servicemen outside the 48 contiguous States of the United States.

Section 2 of the bill adds a new section 3406 to title 39, to provide a statutory provision for the air transportation of parcels mailed to or from servicemen. The former provision of law (39 U.S.C. 4560) was not reenacted under the Postal Reorganization Act (Public Law 91-375), but the service is continuing under a Postal Service regulation. This section will continue the service under authority of law. In

addition, it increases the weight of parcels entitled to air transportation from 30 pounds to 70 pounds and the size from 60 inches in length and girth combined to 100 inches.

COST

The Department of the Air Force estimates that the additional cost to the Department of Defense for reimbursement to the Postal Service for loss of postal revenue for letters and sound recordings sent by servicemen without postage is approximately \$5 million annually.

The increased size and weight of parcels under section 3406 of title 39, as added by section 2 of the bill, will result in a reduction of expenditures by the Department of Defense, because such parcels may be transported by air on a space-available basis rather than at the higher rate of transportation for airmail.

The additional cost for each of the next five fiscal years will be reduced proportionally as the number of servicemen overseas is reduced.

AGENCY REPORTS

The agency reports on this legislation are set forth below:

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET,
Washington, D.C., July 26, 1971.

Hon. THADDEUS J. DULSKI,
*Chairman, Committee on Post Office and Civil Service,
Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This is in reply to your request for the views of the Office of Management and Budget on H.R. 3808, a bill, "To amend title 39, United States Code, as enacted by the Postal Reorganization Act, to provide additional free letter mail and air transportation mailing privileges for certain members of the United Armed Forces, and for other purposes."

Sections 1(a) and 1(b) of the bill would extend the free mailing privilege on letters, cards, and sound-recorded communications, now granted to military personnel in combat areas and those hospitalized as the result of injury or disease incurred in combat areas, to all members of the Armed Forces of the United States, and of friendly foreign nations, served by an Armed Forces post office located outside of the 48 contiguous States, plus those hospitalized in a United States military facility because of injury or disease incurred while on active duty.

In its report to your Committee, the Department of Defense states that this section would not expedite mail deliveries or otherwise improve the mail service, and questions the justification for extending special mail privileges to servicemen not in combat areas. The Department points out that such privileges were originally granted in recognition of the unique needs of those men serving under the trying and hazardous conditions of combat. Defense also notes that reimbursements to the United States Postal Service required by this section would further restrict Defense's ability to channel funds from the total military compensation allocation into areas more important to all military personnel. The Office of Management and

Budget concurs in the views of the Department of Defense, and recommends against enactment of sections 1(a) and 1(b) of H.R. 3808.

We have no objection to section 1(c) of the bill. The Department of Defense presently airlifts time-value publications to all overseas areas after determining through an annual time study that surface transportation is inadequate. Enactment of section 1(c) would authorize the Department of Defense to airlift such publications without being required to make this annual study.

While we have no objection in principle to changes in the permissible size of parcels in the parcel airlift service (PAL), we oppose enactment of section 2. In keeping with the principle underlying the Postal Reorganization Act P. L. 91-375, that the Postal Service and the Postal Rate Commission, as appropriate, should determine the nature of postal services, a decision to make changes in the size of parcels should be made under the procedures outlined in the Postal Reorganization Act rather than through permanent legislation enacted by Congress.

Sincerely,

WILFRED H. ROMMEL,
Assistant Director for
Legislative Reference.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, July 27, 1971.

HON. THADDEUS J. DULSKI,
Chairman, Post Office and Civil Service Committee,
House of Representatives.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Reference is made to your request to the Secretary of Defense for the views of the Department of Defense with respect to H.R. 3808, 92d Congress, a bill "To amend title 39, United States Code, as enacted by the Postal Reorganization Act, to provide additional free letter mail and air transportation mailing privileges for certain members of the United States Armed Forces, and for other purposes." The Secretary of Defense has assigned to the Department of the Air Force the responsibility for expressing the views of the Department of Defense.

The purpose of H.R. 3808 is as stated in its title.

The first section of the bill would amend subparagraphs (A) and (B) of section 3401(a)(1) of title 39, United States Code, as enacted by the Postal Reorganization Act, to extend the privilege of free mailing of letters and sound-recorded communications to all members of the Armed Forces of the United States and of friendly foreign nations who are served by a military post office located outside the 48 contiguous States and those hospitalized in any United States military facility as a result of disease or injury incurred while on active duty. This is presently accorded to military personnel in combat areas and those hospitalized as a result of injury or disease incurred while in a combat area. Enactment would grant free mailing privileges to approximately 575,000 additional military personnel. Section 3401(c) of title 39, United States Code, requires the Department of Defense to reimburse the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) for their loss of postal revenue for matter sent in the mails under section 3401(a).

The bill would also amend section 3401(b) to provide space available airlift to, from, and between all military post offices located outside the 48 contiguous States for second-class news publications published weekly or more frequently. The present subsection (b)(2) provides airlift of such publications for military post offices located (1) in combat areas as designated by the President, or (2) in an isolated, hardship, or combat support area overseas, or where adequate surface transportation is not available. Enactment of this section would merely extend the airlift of publications to military post offices in the remaining foreign countries which do not enjoy such service today.

Section 2 of the bill would add a section to the revised title 39, United States Code, to continue the parcel airlift (PAL) law and to increase the present size limitation of parcel airlift mail from 60 inches in length and girth combined to 72 inches in length and girth combined.

The Department of the Air Force does not support sections 1 (a) and (b) of H.R. 3808 because:

1. Those provisions of H.R. 3808 would extend to servicemen not in combat areas, benefits and privileges which were originally designed in recognition of, and to give special service to, the needs of those men serving under trying and hazardous conditions which are unique to a combat zone. There is no justification for extending to those not associated with combat zones free mailing privileges for letters and sound-recorded communications.

2. There are no urgent military or postal reasons for this legislation. Outside of the combat zone and even in some combat zones, overseas military personnel have equal or better access to a post office than the average citizen in the United States. They pay only the domestic rates of postage for mailings to family and friends. Since the average oversea military member mails the equivalent of twelve letters per month, the free mailing privilege reduces his total expenses by \$1.32 per month.

3. The more than \$5 million cost for reimbursement to the U.S. Postal Service would further restrict the Department of Defense ability to channel funds into areas of more importance to all military personnel. This cost would be considered when future adjustments are desired to military compensations.

4. This section would not expedite mail deliveries or otherwise improve the mail service. Manpower reductions would not result at overseas postal facilities since postage sales must continue for parcel mailings and other services.

The Department of the Air Force supports section 1(c) of the bill. Under the provisions of section 3401(b)(2) of title 39, United States Code, the Department of Defense has determined that surface transportation to all oversea areas is inadequate for the transportation time-value publications, and has implemented airlift to all areas except those where the U.S. Postal Service is responsible for payment of surface transportation costs (Alaska, Hawaii, territories and possessions of the United States in the Pacific area, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and the Panama Canal Zone). We strongly support proposed section 3401(b)(1)(C) in order to relieve the Defense Department from the need to make determinations as to inadequacy of surface transportation as a precondition to airlift of periodicals at SAM rates.

The Department of the Air Force supports the intent of Section 2 of H.R. 3808 because:

1. It will allow mailings under the PAL law of items presently excluded due to size. The present limitation on dimensions for parcels under the PAL rule is not commensurate with the weight permitted. It is difficult to place 30 pounds within the limit of 1 cubic foot (60 inches, girth and length combined) unless the density of the object is extremely high.

2. Increasing the size limitation will provide a means for many of the parcels now being transported as airmail to be mailed and transported as PAL, at considerably less cost to the mailer, the Department of Defense, and the United States Postal Service.

Of course, as to whether this should be achieved by legislation or by action of the Postal Rate Commission, we defer to the U.S. Postal Service.

This report has been coordinated within the Department of Defense in accordance with procedures prescribed by the Secretary of Defense.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that, from the standpoint of the Administration's program, there is no objection to the presentation of this report for the consideration of the Committee.

Sincerely,

JAMES P. GOODE,
Deputy Assistant Secretary,
(Personnel Policy).

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3 of Rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italics, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

CHAPTER 34 OF TITLE 39, UNITED STATES CODE

Part IV.—MAIL MATTER

* * * * *

Chapter 34.—ARMED FORCES AND FREE POSTAGE

Sec.

- 3401. Mailing privileges of members of Armed Forces of the United States and of friendly foreign nations.
- 3402. Mailing privileges of members of Armed Forces of the United States and of friendly foreign nations in the Canal Zone.
- 3403. Matter for blind and other handicapped persons.
- 3404. Unsealed letters sent by blind or physically handicapped persons.
- 3405. Markings.
- 3406. *Air transportation of parcels mailed at or addressed to Armed Forces post offices.*

§ 3401. Mailing privileges of members of Armed Forces of the United States and of friendly foreign nations

(a) Letter mail or sound-recorded communications having the character of personal correspondence shall be carried, at no cost to the sender, in the manner provided by this section, when mailed by—

- (1) a member of the Armed Forces of the United States on active duty, as defined in section 101 (4) and (22) of title 10, and

addressed to a place within the delivery limits of a United States post office, if—

(A) such letter *mail* or sound-recorded communication is mailed by the member at an Armed Forces post office established [in an overseas area, as designated by the President, where the Armed Forces of the United States are engaged in action against an enemy of the United States, engaged in military operations involving armed conflict with a hostile foreign force, or serving with a friendly foreign force in an armed conflict in which the United States is not a belligerent] *under section 406(a) of this title which is located at a place outside the fifty States of the United States*; or

(B) the member is hospitalized in a facility under the jurisdiction of the Armed Forces of the United States as a result of disease or injury incurred [as a result of service in an overseas area designated by the President under clause (A) of this paragraph] *while on active duty*; or

(2) a member of an armed force of a friendly foreign nation at an Armed Forces post office and addressed to a place within the delivery limits of a United States post office, or a post office of the nation in whose armed forces the sender is a member, if—

(A) the member is accorded free mailing privileges by his own government;

(B) the foreign nation extends similar free mailing privileges to a member of the Armed Forces of the United States serving with, or in, a unit under the control of a command of that foreign nation;

(C) the member is serving with, or in, a unit under the operational control of a command of the Armed Forces of the United States;

(D) such letter mail or sound-recorded communication is mailed by the member—

(i) at an Armed Forces post office established [in an overseas area, as designated by the President, where the Armed Forces of the United States are engaged in action against an enemy of the United States, engaged in military operations involving armed conflict with a hostile foreign force, or serving with a friendly foreign force in an armed conflict in which the United States is not a belligerent] *under section 406(a) of this title which is located at a place outside the fifty States of the United States*; or

(ii) while hospitalized in a facility under the jurisdiction of the Armed Forces of the United States as a result of disease or injury incurred [as a result of services in an overseas area designated by the President under clause (D)(i) of this paragraph] *while in the services with, or in, a unit under operational control of a command of the Armed Forces of the United States*; and

(E) the nation in whose armed forces the sender is a member has agreed to assume all international postal transportation charges incurred.

(b) There shall be transported by air, between Armed Forces post offices which are located outside the 48 contiguous States of the United States or between any such Armed Forces post office and the point of embarkation or debarkation within the United States, the territories and possessions of the United States in the Pacific area, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, or the Canal Zone, on a space available basis, on scheduled United States air carriers at rates fixed and determined by the Civil Aeronautics Board in accordance with section 1376 of title 49, the following categories of mail matter:

(1)(A) A letter mail or sound-recorded communications having the character of personal correspondence; [and]

(B) parcels not exceeding 5 pounds in weight and 60 inches in length and girth combined; and

(C) *publications entitled to a periodical publication rate published once each week or more frequently and featuring principally current news of interest to members of the Armed Forces and the general public,*

which are mailed at or addressed to any such Armed Forces post office;

[(2) publications (entitled to a periodical publication rate, published once each week or more frequently, and featuring principally current news of interest to members of the Armed Forces and the general public) which are mailed at or addressed to any such Armed Forces post office (A) in an overseas area designated by the President under subsection (a) of this section, or (B) in an isolated, hardship, or combat support area overseas, or where adequate surface transportation is not available; and

[(3) parcels exceeding 5 pounds but not exceeding 70 pounds in weight and not exceeding 100 inches in length and girth combined, including surface-type official mail, which are mailed at or addressed to any such Armed Forces post office where adequate surface transportation is not available.]]

(2) parcels exceeding five pounds but not exceeding seventy pounds in weight and not exceeding one hundred inches in length and girth combined, including surface-type official mail, which are mailed at or addressed to any such Armed Forces post office where adequate surface transportation is not available.

Whenever adequate service by scheduled United States air carriers is not available to provide transportation of mail matter by air in accordance with this subsection, the transportation of such mail may be authorized by other than scheduled United States air carriers.

(c) The Department of Defense shall transfer to the Postal Service as postal revenues, out of any appropriations or funds available to the Department of Defense, as a necessary expense of the appropriations or funds and of the activities concerned, the equivalent amount of postage due, as determined by the Postal Service, for matter sent in the mails under authority of subsection (a) of this section.

(d) The Department of Defense shall transfer to the Postal Service as Postal revenues, out of any appropriations or funds available to the Department of Defense, as a necessary expense of the appropriations or funds and of the activities concerned, sums equal to the expenses incurred by the Postal Service, as determined by the Postal Service, in providing air transportation for mail mailed at or addressed to Armed Forces post offices established under section 406 of this

title, but reimbursement under this subsection shall not include the expense of air transportation (1) for which the Postal Service collects a special charge to the extent the special charge covers the additional expense of air transportation or (2) that is provided by the Postal Service at the same postage rate or charge for mail which is neither mailed at nor addressed to an Armed Forces post office.

(e) This section shall be administered under such conditions, and under such regulations, as the Postal Service and the Secretary of Defense jointly may prescribe.

§ 3402. Mailing privileges of members of Armed Forces of the United States and of friendly foreign nations in the Canal Zone

(a) For the purpose of section 3401 of this title, each post office in the Canal Zone postal service, to the extent that it provides mail service for members of the Armed Forces of the United States and of friendly foreign nations, shall be considered to be an Armed Forces post office established in an overseas area.

(b) The Department of Defense shall reimburse the postal service of the Canal Zone, out of any appropriations or funds available to the Department of Defense, as a necessary expense of the appropriations or funds and of the activities concerned, the equivalent amount of postage due, and sums equal to the expenses incurred by, the postal service of the Canal Zone, as determined by the Governor of the Canal Zone, for matter sent in the mails, and in providing air transportation of mail, under section 3401 of this title.

§ 3403. Matter for blind and other handicapped persons.

(a) The matter described in subsection (b) of this section (other than matter mailed under section 3404 of this title) may be mailed free of postage, if—

(1) the matter is for the use of the blind or other persons who cannot use or read conventionally printed material because of a physical impairment and who are certified by competent authority as unable to read normal reading material in accordance with the provisions of sections 135a and 135b of title 2;

(2) no charge, or rental, subscription, or other fee, is required for such matter or a charge, or rental, subscription, or other fee is required for such matter not in excess of the cost thereof;

(3) the matter may be opened by the Postal Service for inspection; and

(4) the matter contains no advertising.

(b) The free mailing privilege provided by subsection (a) of this section is extended to—

(1) reading matter and musical scores;

(2) sound reproductions;

(3) paper, records, tapes, and other material for the production of reading matter, musical scores, or sound reproductions;

(4) reproducers or parts thereof, for sound reproductions; and

(5) braille writers, typewriters, educational or other materials or devices, or parts thereof, used for writing by, or specifically designed or adapted for use of, a blind person or a person having a physical impairment as described in subsection (a)(1) of this section.

§ 3404. Unsealed letters sent by blind or physically handicapped persons

Unsealed letters sent by a blind person or a person having a physical impairment, as described in section 3403(a)(1) of this title, in raised characters or sightsaving type, or in the form of sound recordings, may be mailed free of postage.

§ 3405. Markings

All matter relating to blind or other handicapped persons mailed under section 3403 or 3404 of this title, shall bear the words "Free Matter for the Blind or Handicapped", or words to that effect specified by the Postal Service, in the upper right-hand corner of the address area.

§ 3406. Air transportation of parcels mailed at or addressed to Armed Forces post offices

Any parcel, other than a parcel mailed airmail or as air parcel post, not exceeding seventy pounds in weight and one hundred inches in length and girth combined, which is mailed at or addressed to any Armed Forces post office established under section 406(a) of this title shall be transported by air on a space available basis, on scheduled United States air carriers at rates fixed and determined by the Civil Aeronautics Board in accordance with section 1376 of title 49, upon payment, in addition to the regular surface rate of postage, of a fee for such transportation by air. Whenever adequate service by scheduled United States air carriers is not available to provide transportation of mail matter by air in accordance with the foregoing provisions of this section, the transportation of such mail matter may be authorized by aircraft other than scheduled United States air carriers.



